R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS, TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE-OEO SEASONALLY EMPLOYED AGRICULTURAL WORKERS EDUCATIONAL PROJECT, NOVEMBER 1, 1966-OCTOBER 31, 1967.

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PUB DATE EST 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20 28P.

DESCRIPTORS- *ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, *FARMERS, *POVERTY PROGRAMS, *RURAL AREAS, *SELF HELP PROGRAMS, FAMILY HEALTH, SANITATION IMPROVEMENT, TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, HOUSING, GRADE EQUIVALENT SCALES, NEGROES, READING IMPROVEMET, MIGRATION, REFERRAL, SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT, TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, ALABAMA,

THE SEASONALLY EMPLOYED AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM WAS SPONSORED BY TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, TO PROVIDE BASIC AND PREVOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND NEW GOALS FOR 1,239 FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATES, MOST OF THEM OWNERS OF SMALL FARMS, IN SEVEN ALABAMA COUNTIES. FAMILIES WERE HELPED TO IMPROVE THEIR HOUSING, NUTRITION, SANITATION AND HEALTH FACILITIES, AND FARM CROPS, AND TO REGISTER TO VOTE. IN THE SEVEN MONTH TEACHING PHASE OF THE PROGRAM, ALL BUT 79 OF THE 1,122 PARTICIPANTS SHOWED SOME READING IMPROVEMENT AS MEASURED BY GRAY ORAL READING TESTS. WHILE THE AGENCY REFERRAL PROGRAM WAS NOT AS EFFECTIVE AS IT COULD HAVE BEEN. 57 YOUTHS WERE ACCEPTED AT TRADE SCHOOLS, 48 MEN WERE ACCEPTED FOR MDTA TRAINING, AND 605 PERSONS RECEIVED SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS. THE MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENTS WERE LACK OF COOPERATION FROM THE LOCAL POWER STRUCTURE AND AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS AND HARRASSMENT OF TEACHERS AND PARTICIPANTS. IT APPEARS THAT THE BEST TEACHERS OF ADULTS ARE RECENT COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TRAINED AS TEACHERS OF CHILDREN, AND WHO CAN RELATE TO STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS. IF THIS EVIDENCE IS VERIFIED IN THE CONTINUING RESEARCH PHASE OF THE PROGRAM, THE CRITERIA FOR TEACHER SELECTION SHOULD BE REEVALUATED. (DOCUMENT INCLUDES FIVE TABLES.) (AJ)

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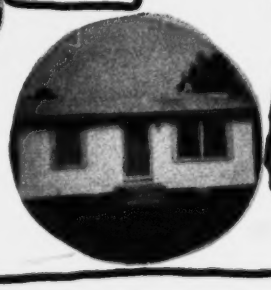
Summary of Accomplishments and Disappointments

Tuskegee Institute—OEO Seasonally
Employed Agricultural Workers Educational Project

November 1, 1966—October 31, 1967



PERRY
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C O N T E N T S

A INTRODUCTION

B ACCOMPLISHMENTS

C DISAPPOINTMENTS

D SOME TENTATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the Seasonally Employed Agricultural Workers Program sponsored by Tuskegee Institute, under the auspices of the Office of Economic Opportunity were to provide basic and prevocational education for a sample of 1,239 functional illiterates in seven Alabama Counties. Basic education as envisioned by Tuskegee Institute involves more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. It involves an intensive motivational program which gives people new hope, new energies, and an almost completely new set of goals. Additionally, it provides for self-realization and a determined effort on the part of the participants to lift themselves up by their own effort, it destroys dependency and develops independency. It must never be overlooked that the population with which this program was concerned was originally the product of a semi-feudal system, the major product of which was, and still is to a large extent, illiteracy and poverty. It is within this frame of reference that this report should be read and interpreted, and it is within this frame of reference that determined men and women of goodwill set forth upon the task of effecting social and economic changes within the boundaries of our democratic society.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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For all practical purposes and intent, an effective basic adult education program should, among other things, manifest itself in the things that people do differently. In order to evaluate the sociological and economical impact, a survey of the 1,239 participants was conducted by the staff at the beginning and at the conclusion of the program.

B. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The pictorial evidences and a brief description of each, as well as the raw figures present in tabular form, should give the reader a partial idea of what has been accomplished during the period November 1, 1966 - October 31, 1967.

The picture appearing below was the home of a Bullock County family. This family was poor, but more illiterate than poor.

As it turned out, this family, in addition to everything else, needed help and guidance in the wise use of money. After being counseled and given intensive instruction in money management and sources of home financing, the family constructed the house appearing below.

The problem here was that the head of the household had little or no confidence in himself, he doubted his own ability tomove forward and he knew less about how to go about getting a house financed. With continued education this house will provide a new environment for the family and the children will undoubtedly have an opportunity to grow up outside the once hopeless walls of deprivation.

The concerns and/or problems of seasonal farmers are more varied than the colors of the rainbow. Depicted on page 4 is a seasonal farmer whose major concern was how to augment his already very meager income.

This farmer, whose family was relatively large, accepted the advice of the teacher-counselor and planted about five acres of cucumbers. As shown in the picture above, this farmer has reaped his cucumbers, and his wife who is shown with him, is about to accompany him to Prattville, Alabama to have his cucumbers graded and sold. Unlike what many sociologists believe, small farmers do not necessarily want to leave their environment, they want to stay in their own setting and be given an opportunity to make a decent living. The educational system in the South has not been as effective in the past as it should be, therefore, adults have to be given continuous assistance in identifying alternatives and consequences. Poverty and deprivation among seasonal farmers in Alabama is not altogether a function of lack of education and money. It is also the product of a social system which displays little or no interest in the small illiterate farmers. The Cooperative Extension Service, for example, can provide valid information as to the growth of agricultural

production in Alabama, but the fact is that most of this growth is being effected by large farmers and the thousands of small farmers in the state have little representation, are producing less and less, and are getting further in the red every year. This does not have to be. A reorganization and reorientation towards farming and marketing can offset much of the frustrations with which small farmers are confronted. Why plant cotton when okra, beans, cucumbers or any other truck crops can, and do, make more money per acre? The reason is that small farmers are encouraged by the system to plant crops which make money for the fertilizer companies and the cotton dealers. An educational program such as the one conducted at Tuskegee Institute does help farmers to determine alternatives and consequences, and does help them to break away from a system which is designed to exploit them and keep them in debt.

As mentioned earlier, the problems of illiterate seasonal farmers are complex and varied and any meaningful adult education program must address itself to all the problems, not just some of the problems. In Alabama, as in many other states, the poor and illiterate farmer is always having a multiplicity of health problems. The display as showr in the picture on page 6 depicts a teacher working with her

class on some essential food groups.

Trainees that were enrolled in the program were exposed to training in preparing a balanced daily diet. Additionally, they were given intensive training in food planning and purchasing. This phase of the program was never a very easy task. Families of 10-15 with an average income of $30 to $50 per week makes it more than a little difficult to help them plan and prepare meals in which they are likely to get the minimum daily requirements. Many families in the seven counties in which the program operated never had a physical examination in their lives. Many of their children have never seen a doctor even though the evidence seems overwhelming that these families needed medical attention. Table I indicates the progress made in helping people to improve their health and to destroy as much as possible the health hazards that were rampant in the rural communities:

TABLE I. CHANGES IN HEALTH AND SANITATION FACILITIES OF A SAMPLE OF POOR RURAL FARM FAMILIES IN SEVEN COUNTIES IN ALABAMA

	Status Before	Status After	Net Change
Doctors:			
family	772	1,419	649
dentist	461	909	448
optometrist	359	719	360
Water Supply:			
running water in homes	109	212	103
electric pump	110	283	175
Improper Disposal	238	62	176
Privies:			
pit	583	1,004	421
septic	66	120	60

As can be observed from the figures in Table I, many more families than actually participated in the classrooms were counseled and assisted by the staff. For example, 772 families had a family doctor at the beginning of the program and at its conclusion 1,419 families had family doctors. There are actually thousands of families in the seven county area that needed medical help and there are just as many that knew nothing about medicare before the professional staff of this project went in to work with them.

Middle class and upper class families and some bureaucrats who were born in plenty and are currently encircled in the lavishness of their wealth give lip-service to poverty and the

deprivation, but the fact is, they cannot empathize and the problems of the poor are open to them. Up to date, sanitary conveniences, three meals per day and a comfortable bed in which to sleep is just one of the never ending dreams of the poor. In Table I, mention was made of privies, running water, improper disposal and so forth. These are some serious concerns of the poor and they do need help and guidance. These types of conditions do not only endanger the health of the individuals involved but the health of the entire community. The picture appearing here tells the story.

This was the privy and bath of a participant, but with some assistance he changed to this:

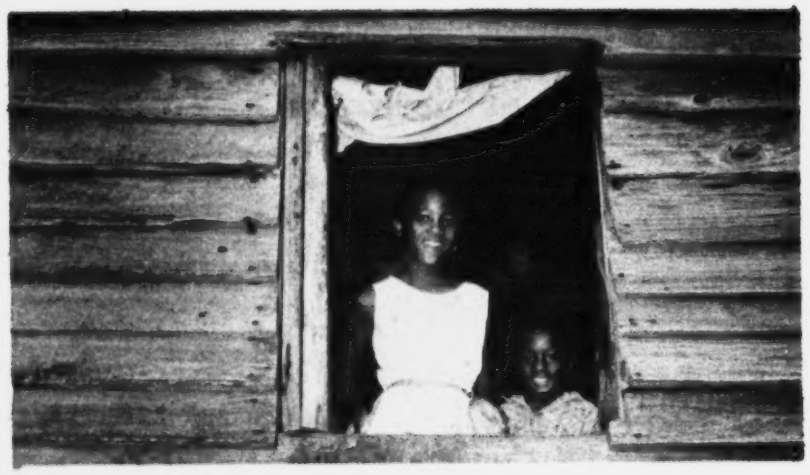
Note carefully, just about all the material used to construct his new sanitary convenience was old material salvaged from his broken down privy. His source of water supply was almost as bad as his sanitary conveniences, but that too was improved as is shown in the picture.

The change from actually drawing water by hand from a well to an electric pump means that this man for the first time in his life could have running water in his house. This seems not too significant to the affluent men and women of society, but this is a very great and significant step for a man whose children were growing up without knowing how it feels to have a shower.

It is generally assumed that city slums are the worst kind of slums, but this is not necessarily true. Beyond the fact that city slums are crowded, rural slums are equally as defeating to the residents.

Rural slums, as depicted in the pictorial evidence (page 11) is very common in Alabama. It is little wonder that the infant death rate in Alabama and other Deep South States is so high. It should be of no surprise to the nation why these people migrate to the large cities unequipped to cope with urban life. For the first time in their life they see a concerted effort being made by their national government to help a relatively small sample of them, and while many have received some new hope and have benefited materially, there are thousands yet to be reached and rescued from what may be called the "human" waste basket. The "Powers that exist" failed to recognize that urban poverty had its birth in rural America, they have failed to recognize that a rural social system which produces illiteracy and poverty is not only a drain on the national economy but this ultra-conservative system is also producing the fuse, which when ignited in an urban setting, produces a national dilemma. Many families that would have left the seven county area in Ala-

bama have stayed just as a result of the educational program which provided them with a glimmer of hope. Less than 5 percent of the participants receiving stipends in the program have left, and all can point to something concrete that they they themselves have done or received some help in doing.



In the picture on page 12, there are seven children and a husbandless mother. She is the head of the household and the sole breadwinner for those children. Headstart has not yet reached down that far to those children and to them, the "powers that exist" in the counties involved couldn't care

less. As hopeless as this may appear to be, there is an abundance of evidence which support the investments that are being made in rescuing those human beings. The process in many instances is a long and complicated one but as of this point and time there is no doubt that education and training is the most likely vehicle through which concrete changes will be established.

The trainees entered the new learning situation with a wide range of experiences. These experiences, some quite challenging to the teachers, provided in large part a starting point for the teachers. For many of the trainees, it had been 30 years or more since they were in a classroom and for many there was little or no relationship between their professed grade level and the actual grade at which they were functioning. Table II indicates their professed grade level and their level of functioning at the beginning and at the conclusion of the seven months teaching phase of the program.

TABLE II. PROFESSED GRADE LEVEL AND GRADE EQUIVALENCE OF 1,122 PARTICIPANTS

Grade Attainment	Professed Grade Level	Per-cent	Grade Equiv. on 1st. Test	Per-cent	Grade Equiv. on 2nd. Test	Per-cent
0-1	95	8.03	313	7.91	79	7.03
2	59	5.41	171	15.24	95	8.46
3	118	10.04	170	15.15	157	13.99
4	136	11.32	191	17.04	264	23.57
5	140	11.65	125	11.14	187	16.66
6	241	20.81	82	7.30	159	14.17
7	195	16.13	46	4.09	114	10.16
8	143	11.82	24	2.13	52	4.63
9	53	4.39	0		9	0.80
10	3	00.24	0		6	0.53
11	1	.08	0			
12	1	.08	0			
	*1185	100,00	1122	100.00	1122	100.00

It may be observed from Table II that 95 of the 1,122 participants indicated that they either had never been to school or had completed the first grade. When the entire group of 1,122 participants were tested with the Gray Oral Reading Test for the first time, then it was found that 313 of them had either never attended school or if they had then they were not functioning in reading beyond the first grade level. After six months of classroom instruction they were given a second test and at that time (313-79) 134 of them

*Sixty-three participants failed to take both tests.

had moved up from the first grade. For all practical purposes and intent, only 79 of the 1,122 participants did not show some academic improvement as a result of their exposure to classroom instruction.

TABLE III indicates the changes made in grade equivalents by the females who took both tests.

TABLE III. COMPARISON OF FIRST AND SECOND TESTS GRADE EQUIVALENTS OF FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

First Test Grade Equivalents		0-1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No.		235	131	142	164	106	75	44	23	
Second	0-1	69	0							69
Test Grade	2	65	4							69
Equivalents	3	59	38	13	8					118
	4	40	63	62	35	4				204
	5	2	22	47	58	24	4			157
	6		3	15	46	49	20	5		138
	7		1	5	17	25	37	17		102
	8					4	14	22	8	48
	9								9	9
	10								6	6
Total		235	131	142	164	106	75	44	23	920

It may be observed from Table II that when the first test was administered (235+131+142+164+106) 778 of the 920 female participants were reading at the 5th grade or below, after six months of instruction (69+69+118+204+157) 617 were still in that category which indicate that only (778-617) 161 had moved out of that category.

Examining the table, it will be further observed that 209 of the 920 female participants either retrogressed or showed

no improvement in grade equivalents that could be measured by current academic standards. Of the 235 females who were functioning at the first grade or below only 69 remained in that category; as a matter of fact, 42 had progressed to the fourth grade or above.

Table IV indicates the changes made in grade equivalents by the males who took both tests.

TABLE IV. COMPARISON OF FIRST AND SECOND TEST GRADE EQUIVALENTS OF MALE PARTICIPANTS

First Test Grade Equivalents		0-1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No.		78	40	28	27	19	7	2	1	
Second	0-1	10								10
Test Grade	2	23	3							26
Equivalents	3	27	9	3						39
	4	17	16	17	10					60
	5	1	6	7	13	3				30
	6		6	1	2	10	2			21
	7				2	5	4	1		12
	8					1	1	1	1	4
		78	40	28	27	19	7	2	1	202

Of the 202 males, 23 failed to show any improvement in terms of grade equivalents, percentage-wise this is 16% as compared to 23% of the female participants. Only 10 of the 202 males were still at the first grade level or below after the six months of classroom instruction, and (202-33) 169 had shown some academic improvement.

As mentioned earlier on basic education in this setting involves more than reading, writing and arithmetic, in the circumstances, even those who show little or no academic improvement may have been helped tremendously in other ways. For example, of the 1,122 trainees, 425 could vote when they entered the program, at the conclusion of the program an additional 528 were registered to vote which indicates that of the 1,122 trainees, 1,013 were registered to vote at the conclusion of the program. A much more significant accomplishment in this area is that these 1,013 registered voters in the seven county area influenced an addition 4,830 citizens to become registered voters.

All of the trainees did something concrete to improve their living conditions, even though they had to be given voluntary assistance from their neighbors and other class participants, they all made a desperate effort to help themselves. The woman in Alabama is undoubtedly the head of the household and this is true even where there is a living husband or adult living in the house. She makes all the decision and gives direction to the family, she plans her children's destiny in a social system that is beastly hostile to the Negro male and in fact, she has exemplified maybe the one and only method of survival in an environment that de-

fies all social institutions designed to bring about socio-economic progress. The pictures below tells a story of many women who refuse to give up.

Miss "M" lived in the house at the left when the adult education program started. She, like many other females, had no husband and she, like many of the others, showed little or no academic improvement but she showed a rare kind of resilience and determination. She is now in the process of completing the house shown at the right.

The program is over and Miss "M" is getting no more stipends and one wonders if she will ever finish her home. There is no doubt that she will. She has a stake in her community and an interest in people, many of whom are worse off than she. Still more important, she has been motivated and she has the will to do.

The teachers and county coordinators spend endless hours trying to move people out of the cycle of poverty. They developed a comprehensive referral scheme where they referred individuals to every federal and state agency that they "know" could offer some service to the poor. To date it is questionable if the referral program was as effective in this social system as it could have been. A desperate effort was made by all concerned to get as many of the participants into MDTA training, jobs, vocational schools, and etc. Table V indicates what has been accomplished in this direction.

TABLE V. RESULTS OF REFERRALS MADE TO A SELECTED NUMBER OF OTHER AGENCIES

	Status Before	Status After	Net Change
Number applied to trade schools	1	58	57
Number accepted into MDTA	0	48	48
Number of job transfers	0	55	55
Number accepted in jobs	0	195	195
Number receiving Social Security	300	905	605

Within the seven county area, only one youth had applied to the state trade schools, as a result of a teacher's effort 57 additional youths have applied and have been accepted. At the beginning of the program none of the trainees had applied

for MDTA training, at the conclusion 48 have been trained and are currently employed. The picture below shows some of the participants being trained in carpentry.

There is little or no doubt that there is great hope for people who have been motivated to help themselves. The pattern this program follows is a unique one--motivation, basic education, vocational training, job placement where possible, and finally, the development of self and independence. It is not and will never be an easy task with men and women who have been conditioned for over a century not to be identified.

C. DISAPPOINTMENTS

The disappointments and frustrations encountered in this program have been many and varied. Let it be made abundantly clear, however, that except for the fact that the national office (OEO) identify seasonal and migrant farmers as one of the same and that they fail to recognize that the Negro fe-

male, particular in the South, is the head of the household they have given us every cooperation in helping to make this program succeed.

The major disappointments revolve around people, not money, to operate the program. the local power structure in most of the seven counties did not cooperate as one would expect. In one county a classroom was burned, in another a house was bombed and in nearly every community teachers and participants were subjected to some intimidation from extremist groups. Caucasian participants were in some instances harassed even worst than Negro participants. The one common denominator was that all the harassment was done by Caucasians. It is the judgment of the writers that the local power structures could have done more to curb the violators of individual freedom. Maybe they could not.

The federal and state agencies to which participants were referred failed in a number of instances to even keep appointments or interview the persons that were referred--much more to offer them assistance. There has been one instance where a federal agent even refused to give the location of his office because he did not want to be bothered by the participants. To say the least, it has been a struggle to get the services for the poor that have been provided by both the

federal and state agencies. The local administrators of these agencies are not committed and they couldn't care less about the poor beyond the fact that it is good for them to remain poor.

Finally, there are still thousands of citizens that need help in the respective communities but the program was not designed to accommodate but so much. Men and women who exhibited fear of what might happen to them if they entered the program have now gained some confidence and over two thousands (primarily men) have expressed a desire to come into any future program.

The writers recognize the difficulties involved in social change and they recognize even more that the multiplicity of ideas of how social change is to be effected is also a problem; in the circumstances, the frustrations and disappointment encountered in this program will not hamper their effort to use education as the most effective vehicle to bring about social change.

D. SOME TENTATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The program as conducted by Tuskegee Institute may have meshed more with the philosophy of a group of people who do not want to move physically from their environment. It was evident from the offset that the frame of reference for the seasonally employed agricultural workers is much different

from the frame of reference of the migrant farmer. In the circumstances, it was found that their goals and aspirations differ equally as much.

More often than not, the seasonal farmer owns a small farm, which might not be more than three acres, but he has a stake in his community. He wants to vote, he wants his children to go to school in the community, he wants a good house in which to live, a job which does not separate him from his family, and a host of other things. In short, he wants an opportunity to make a go of life where he was born and is currently living.

The migrant farmer is nomadic in his propensities, and naturally he has to be if he is to exist. His children, if they go to school, may attend several different schools, they have no ties, he himself is anchored no where, he has no community in which to attach himself, therefore, his immediate goals and aspirations are quite different or at least less sophisticated than those of the seasonally employed agricultural worker. If and when the migrant farmer gets a steady job and settles in an area permanently, then he is off to a good start. Getting registered to vote, getting interested in the local school board, questioning what is being done with his tax dollar, making plans to

send his children to college, etc., all constitute the next step.

In the case of the seasonal farmer, this is different, he is already at the point where he has all the aspirations of the middle and upper class families, but the social system has cheated him for decades. It is this population (seasonal farmers) that the Tuskegee Institute-OEO project was concerned with. This population recognizes very well that getting a job away from their respective communities will not necessarily solve their problems. These women and men that are still remaining in the South are those who quite correctly see no future in migrating to the big cities to join the ranks of the unemployed. The rural South holds a brighter future for them and this OEO should recognize. Additionally, OEO should also recognize that urban problems had its birth in rural America and primarily in the rural South. The choice should be made now whether to treat the problem at the source of its origin or wait until it has moved to Detroit, New York, Watts or wherever it may be.

Teaching adults is probably one of the most fascinating jobs for those who love to teach, but the selection of teachers of adults is probably more fascinating. The evidence at this point is inconclusive, but it would appear that the

most qualified and experienced teachers in a college, high school or elementary school setting, when requested to teach adults, do not perform as well as those college graduates or high school graduates who have had no previous experience in teaching youths. The implications here are far reaching. It would appear that administrators of basic adult education programs may have been overlooking their best source from which to obtain productive teachers. Beyond that point, it also seems that personnel cost would be greatly reduced when recent college graduates with baccalaureate degrees and high school graduates are used. As mentioned earlier, the evidence is inconclusive, but it appears that the personality and attitudes of the teacher and his ability to relate to his students as individuals were the major factors in making learning a rewarding experience. If this evidence is verified in the continuing research phase of the program, then the criteria for selecting teachers should be re-evaluated equally as much as the current course content used in training teachers of adults.

Teachers in general made greater progress with participants who were functioning below the fifth grade than with those who were functioning at the fifth grade or above. Non-readers can be moved up to about the third or fourth grade

level of reading in 10 to 12 weeks but from that point, where the level of difficulty increases the participants seem to either hit a plateau or in some cases retrogress slightly. It may be also that the teachers failed miserably at that point to relate themselves effectively to the trainees. One thing seem pretty clear, much more research is needed in this area of adult education.

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